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Environmental Cleanup of Colony Site Complete Brownfields Loan Clears Way for Redevelopment

(RENO, Nev.) - The cleanup of environmental contamination at a future retail site on the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony (RSIC) was completed using a \$950,000 federal loan from the State of Nevada Brownfields Program, made possible by a \$2 million grant from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 9 to the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP).

“This is a historic moment for all of the entities involved,” Leo Drozdoff, administrator of the NDEP said. “The project is the first of its kind to be completed in Nevada and the first on an Indian-owned site in the entire Western region.”

The loan helped the Colony complete the final phase of the cleanup of petroleum and lead contamination left by previous tenants of the site located on East Second St., just east of U.S. 395. Previous businesses located there included an auto storage facility and a radiator repair shop. The recently completed cleanup was accomplished by digging out and hauling away the contaminated soil. Construction of a large retail store will begin on the site in the near future.

“The Reno-Sparks Indian Colony is extremely pleased with the cooperation between all of the entities and the outcome of the collaboration that has led to the cleanup of this site,” Arlan Melendez, RSIC Chairman said. “Without the loan, it would have been very difficult for the Colony to redevelop this site from old underutilized industrial uses to a major retailer.”

The loan is the first one applied for and awarded through NDEP’s Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Program.

“This successful project is the first Brownfields loan made to a Tribal nation in EPA’s Pacific Southwest Region and we’re proud to have funded NDEP’s program,” said David Lloyd, Director of the EPA’s Brownfields and Land Revitalization Office. “The Reno-Sparks Indian Colony shows how cleaning up and redeveloping blighted properties can lead to significant sustainable environmental, economic and social benefits for communities.”

Colony representatives submitted the RLF loan application in June 2007. RLF loans provide flexible, negotiable, low-interest terms which are typically more favorable than those offered by traditional lenders.

“This is part of our Nevada Land Recycling Program,” said NDEP’s Drozdoff. “We’re pleased to be able to help the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony transform this contaminated piece of property to productive use. It will provide long-term benefits to residents in the area and to the community as a whole.”

The mission of the Brownfields Program is to facilitate the recycling of contaminated lands back into productive use. According to Drozdoff, Brownfields redevelopment benefits the environment, the community and local business by cleaning up contaminated properties, mitigating potential health risks, revitalizing pre-existing structures and services and returning those properties to the tax rolls.

NDEP’s technical staff oversees the assessment and cleanup of the contaminated sites to ensure that the work is completed in accordance with state law, and that it’s protective of human health and the environment. The staff works with city and county officials and with potential investors to facilitate development of the cleaned-up sites. The agency also works closely with EPA, the primary source of Brownfields funding throughout the United States, to maximize the financial, technical and human resources needed for the successful completion of a Brownfields project.

Anyone interested in the Brownfields Program or in applying for a loan or a grant, may contact NDEP at (775) 687-9379. Cities, counties and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply for grant money and almost any individual, company or organization interested in recycling a piece of contaminated property may apply for an RLF loan.

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